

## How Man's Strength Fluctuates.

THE strength of males increases rapidly from twelve to nineteen years, and more slowly and regularly up to thirty years, after which it declines. The strength of females increases at a more uniform rate from nine to nineteen years, more slowly to thirty, after which it falls off.

## The Club-Footed Man

A NEW SPY SERIAL BY VALENTINE WILLIAMS  
Desmond Is Brought Face to Face  
With Emperor in the  
Berlin Schloss.

(Synopsis of Preceding Chapters.)  
Desmond Oskew, British army officer, goes to Germany in search of his brother, Francis, a member of the British secret service. At a small frontier town a man named Semlin, a German government agent, drops dead in his room. Desmond appropriates Semlin's papers and assumes his identity. He reaches Berlin without incident and is concealed into the presence of General Von Boden, an aide of the Kaiser.

We were in a broad and pleasant passage now, paneled in cheerful light brown oak with red hangings. After the desolation of the State apartments, this comfortable corridor had at least the appearance of leading to the habitation of a man. A giant trooper in field-gray with a curious silver gorget suspended round his neck by a chain paced up and down the passage, his jackboots making no sound upon the soft, thick carpet with which the floor was covered. The man in green stopped at the door. Holding up a warning hand to me, he bent his head and listened. There was a moment of absolute silence. Not a sound was to be heard in the whole castle. Then the man in green knocked and was admitted, leaving me outside.

A moment later, the door swung open again. A tall, elegant man with gray hair that you find in every man who has spent a life at court, came out hurriedly. He looked pale and harassed.

On seeing me he stopped short. "Dr. Grundt? Where is Dr. Grundt?" he asked and his eyes dropped to my feet. He started and raised them to my face.

The trooper had drifted out of earshot. I could see him, immobile as a statue, standing at the end of the corridor. Except for him and us, the passage was deserted. Again the elderly man spoke and his voice betrayed his anxiety.

"Who are you?" he asked almost in a whisper. "What have you done with Grundt? Why has he not come?"

Boldly I took the plunge. "I am Semlin," I said. "Semlin," echoed the other, "ah yes! the embassy in Washington wrote about you—but Grundt was to have come."

"Listen," I said, "Grundt could not come. We had to separate and he sent me on ahead. But the man was stammering now in his anxiety—" "You succeeded?"

He nodded.

"It will be awkward, very awkward," he said. "You will have to explain everything to him, everything. Wait there an instant."

He darted back into the room. Once more I stood and waited in that silent place, so restful and so still that one felt oneself in a world far removed from the angry strife of nations. And I wondered if my interview—the meeting I had so much dreaded—was at an end.

"Pat, Pat!" The elderly man stood at the open door. He led me through a room, a cozy place, smelling pleasantly of leather furniture, to a door. He opened it, revealing across a narrow threshold another door. On this he knocked.

"Herein!" cried a voice—a harsh, metallic voice.

My companion turned the handle and, opening the door, thrust me into the room. The door closed behind me.

I found myself facing the Emperor.

### CHAPTER IX.

I Encounter An Old Acquaintance Who Leads Me to a Delightful Surprise.

He stood in the center of the room, facing the door, his legs straddled apart, planted firmly on the ground, one hand behind his back, the other, withered and useless like the rest of the arm, thrust into the side pocket of his tunic. He wore a perfectly plain undress uniform of solid-gray, and the unusual simplicity of his dress, coupled with the fact that he was bare-headed, rendered him so unlike his conventional portraits in the full panoply of state that I doubt if I should have recognized him—paradoxical as it may seem—but for the havoc depicted in every lineament of those once so familiar features.

Only one man in the world today could look like that. Only one man in the world today could show by the ravages in his face, the appalling weight of responsibility slowly crushing one of the most vigorous and resilient personalities in Europe.

His figure, erstwhile erect and well-knit, seemed to have shrunk, and his withered arm, unnaturally looped away into his pocket, assumed a prominence that lent something sinister to that forbidding gray and harassed face.

His head was sunk forward on his breast. His face, always intensely sorrowful, almost Italian in its olive tint, was livid. All its alertness was gone; the features seemed to have collapsed, and the flesh hung flabbily, bulging in deep pouches under the eyes and in loose folds at the corners of the mouth.

His head was grizzled an iron-gray but the hair at the temples was white as driven snow. Only his eyes were unchanged. They were the same gray, steady eyes, restless, shifting, unrelenting, mirrors of the man's impulsive, wayward and fickle mind.

He lowered at me. His brow was furrowed and his eyes flashed malice. In the brief instant in which I gazed at him I thought of a phrase a friend had used after seeing the Kaiser in one of his angry moods—"His icy, black look."

I was so taken aback at finding myself in the Emperor's presence that I forgot my part and remained staring in stupefaction at the apparition. The other was seemingly too busy with his thoughts to notice my forgetfulness for he spoke at once, imperiously, in the harsh staccato of a command.

"What is this I hear?" he said. "Why has not Grundt come? What are you doing here?"

By this time I had elaborated the fable I had begun to tell in the corridor without. I had it ready now; it was this, but it must suffice.

"If your majesty will allow me, I will explain," I said. The Emperor was rocking himself to and fro in nervous irritability, on his feet. His eyes were never steady for an instant; now they searched my face, now they fell to the floor, now they scanned the ceiling.

"Dr. Grundt and I succeeded in our quest, dangerous though it was. As your majesty is aware, the Kaiser's health is the object had been divided."

"Yes, yes, I know! Go on!" the other said, pausing for a moment in his rocking.

"I was to have left England first with my portion. I could not get away. Everyone is searched for letters and papers at Tilbury. I devised a scheme and we tested it, but it failed."

"How? It failed?" the other cried.

"With no detriment to the success of our mission, your majesty." "Explain! What was your stratagem?"

"I cut a piece of the lining from a hand-bag and in this I wrapped a perfectly harmless letter addressed to an English shipping agent in Rotterdam."

"I then passed the fragment of the lining back in its place in the bottom of the bag. Grundt gave the bag to one of our number as an experiment to see if it would elude the vigilance of the English police."

A light of interest was growing in the Emperor's manner, banishing his ill-humor. Anything novel always appealed to him.

"Well," he said. "The ruse was detected, the letter was found and our man was fined twenty pounds at the police court. It was then that Dr. Grundt decided to send me."

"You've got to live with you?" the other exclaimed eagerly.

"No, Your Majesty," I said. "I had no means of bringing it away."

## When We Have to Make Excuses Generally We Are Wrong

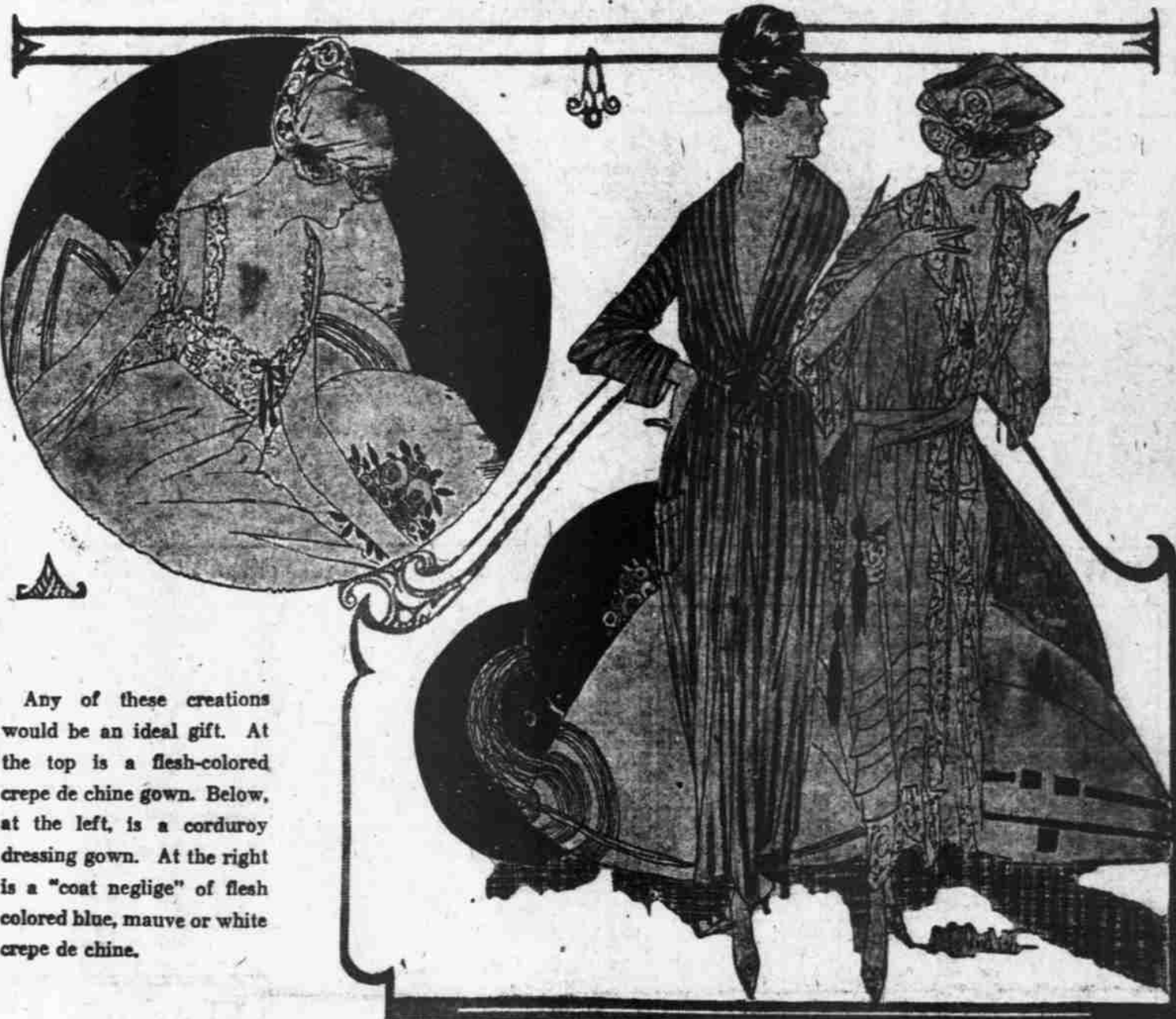


# Magazine Page



## 'Useful and Beautiful Xmas Gifts

Reprinted by Special Arrangement with Good Housekeeping, the Nation's Great Home Magazine



Any of these creations would be an ideal gift. At the top is a flesh-colored crepe de chine gown. Below, at the left, is a corduroy dressing gown. At the right is a "coat negligee" of flesh colored blue, mauve or white crepe de chine.

## Aunt Eppie Hogg, the Fattest Woman in Three Counties, Never Has Any Trouble Getting Odd Jobs Done Around the House at This Season.

By FONTAINE FOX



Dr. Grundt, on the other hand, "And I doubled up my leg and touched my foot." The Emperor stared at me and the furrow reappeared between his eyes. Then a smile broke out on his face, a warm, attractive smile, like sunshine after rain, and he burst into a regular guffaw. I knew His Majesty's weakness for jokes at the expense of the physical deformities of others, but I scarcely dared to hope that my subtle reference to Gungui's clubfoot as a hiding place for compromising papers would have had such a success. For the Kaiser fairly roared in the idea and laughed loud and long, his sides fairly shaking.

"Ach, der Steisel! Excellent! Excellent!" he cried. "Plessen, come hear how we've diddled the Engländer again!" We were in a long room, lofty with a great window at the far end, where the room seemed to run to the right and left in the shape of a T. From the big writing desk with its litter of photographs in heavy silver frames, the little bronze busts of the Emperor, the water-color sea-scapes and other little touches, I judged this to be the Emperor's study.

At the monarch's call, a white-haired officer emerged from behind the door of the room, that part which was hidden from my view. The Kaiser put his hand on his shoulder. "A great joke, Plessen!" he said, chuckling. Then, to me: "Tell it again!" I had warmed to my work now. I gave as drily humorous an account as I could of the Emperor's clubfoot and my part in the matter, hobbling on board the steamer at Tilbury, under the noses of the British police, with the document stowed away in his boot.

## Smothering the Child

(One of the Nation's best-known sociological writers.)

By Dr. A. W. McKeever,

IN Southern California met the other day, and within a few blocks of each other, two young mothers out "airing" their babies. In each case the little one was closely wrapped from top to toe in heavy covers—not even a peep hole. These mothers were out smothering their infants, and that on a beautiful, balmy day.

There is a very common erroneous idea among many mothers that cool, outdoor air will give a baby a "bad cold." But the reverse is more nearly the truth. It is the over-wrapped and partly smothered child which most easily takes cold.

Fresh air is literally a part of the child's necessary nourishment. To cut this off is to take away its food. Sluggish, stupid respiration, poisoned blood, congestion, lowered vitality—all these are likely to result from lack of a plentiful supply of fresh air. And, then, no telling what might happen.

Day, night and Sundays—all the time, no matter how hot or how cold—keep your child breathing only fresh air, and its chances of becoming a strong, rugged man or woman will be at the maximum.

When you give baby his bath, shut off the breeze very carefully and have the room warm, but not stale from lack of oxygen. After the bath, rub till quite dry and warm and till the breathing is deep and full—which is the best assurance of a proper reaction.

Undernourishment is really at least two kinds—lack of food and lack of oxygen. Early in life many children, through mistreatment, become habituated to an under-supply of fresh air. They become sallow, hollow-eyed, flat chested and perhaps a bit stupid. Thus the possibility of a big, strong personality is shut off through lack of a proper supply of that which is "free as the air" and 250 miles deep around the globe.

Parent, it is possible that your child has not taken a deep breath for a year. Look into this matter. The test is easy. Slip up to his couch and notice his breathing during sleep. Is his respiration full and deep? Or slow and shallow and almost inaudible? If the latter is the case, it is a matter for your serious concern.

Now, go after the cause of your child who has flabbily resigned his body to shallow and weak respirations. Start some vigorous exercise. Set his lungs to heaving. Rub him, roll him, bathe him or tone him up in any other reasonable manner.

By vigorous use of fresh air and common sense in the treatment of your smothered child you may save him endless trouble for the future—in form of ill health, untimely death, cloudy intellect and weak will power.

To be good is to breathe good, fresh air and to enjoy the rugged health which only a sufficient oxygen supply can guarantee.

Wake up your child and air him through and through.

## This Day in Our History.

THIS is the anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the War of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain. The war was caused by British aggressions on the high seas. After heavy losses at first the Americans scored a series of victories.

## When a Girl Marries

A STORY OF EARLY WEDDED LIFE.

Anne Finds Herself Involved in Complications As a Result of Schemes to Help Jim

By Ann Lisle.

CHAPTER LXII.  
(Copyright, 1918, by Kings Features Syndicate, Inc.)

THE sound of Jim's voice Terry took Anthony Norreys by the shoulders and fairly shoved him out of the hall door. Then he put his finger to his lips to impose silence and hurried with me to help Jim into the room.

My boy had slipped into his gray lounging robe and was hobbling painfully out of the bedroom with the aid of a cane. He looked how much he had heard of Terry's whispered scheme to aid him. But Terry didn't stop at mere wondering. He took the bull by the horns and proceeded to find out. As soon as we'd established Jim on the big couch, Terry plunged into an explanation.

"I stayed for a chat with the Misses, Jimmie—and a fine little chat we had. Was it loneliness or jealousy that brought you out so suddenly?"

"Terry, you rogue—I'd mind about the fine boy's heart and the square soldierly honesty of you as soon as I would the love and loyalty of my little girl here—and that's never!"

Jim looked at me with a smile that was all tender sweetness and had no undercurrent of meaning. But it hurt—it hurt cruelly.

With a suggestion, intended chiefly for me, Terry replied gravely before he rushed out to join Norreys.

"You're right, lad: next to your little lady and our Betty there's no one wishes you better than Terry, Winston, as I hope you'll always understand."

Then he ran out, banging the door briskly—to relieve his feelings no doubt—and Jim, gazing at the spot where his friend had stood stanch and firm in the doorway, made a queer comment:

"Our Betty," he said. Did you hear him, Anne? I think he wishes often that he might say 'my Betty.' And which of the two is worse haunted by the ghost of Atherton Bryce, I often wonder. And I wonder still more if poor Atherton was worth the sacrifice of two lives."

As he spoke I perched myself precariously on the edge of Jim's couch. My boy slid an arm from under the cover I had thrown over him and drew me close against his head. I stooped and put my lips to his forehead, and then my hand found its way into the broad rippling of his dark hair. Neither of us spoke. The silence was so cozy and so gently in the peace of that moment I felt anew how utterly my Jim and I belonged to each other—in sickness, in health, for richer, for poorer.

Dreaming is halted. A peal at the doorbell brought us back from dreaming. When I threw open the door I stood looking like a shy little wood-nymph tricked out in impudent scarlet and bronze by daring Mother Autumn.

"I just couldn't wait any longer. I wanted to see Jim, and Virginia said I might bring him some grapefruit and this little Delmonico steak," she whispered, lingering on the threshold and waiting timidly to be asked to cross it.

"Come in, kiddie; come over here and kiss your big brother and Anne," she shouted Jim with surprising vigor.

Phoebe pattered over to the couch with a cry of delight: "Why, I thought you were sick!"

"The doctor, and even so eminent an authority as your sister, Mrs. Anne Harrison, labored under the same old impression. But a torn ligament doesn't take long to mend—soldier for long, Phoebe. I think if all this scarlet and gold and bronze-brown loveliness would stay and dine with me I'd be well enough to go out and see the rest of the autumn instead of having it brought to me."

Phoebe giggled in high delight as the invitation to remain was seconded by "the lady of the house."

But I wondered if Jim was unconscious of the fact that now, of course, Neal would escort Phoebe home. I had an idea that all this delight in each other which Jim and Phoebe were showing had really depths of which neither was conscious. Wasn't Jim pathetically eager to be put in touch with Virginia? And wasn't that blinding?

Recently I saw a large window display of artificial flowers. To me the display was ugly, because it was an attempt to supplant the inevitable divinity of the living form.

So with the hot-bed refinement of forcing the artificial young of the earth to pre-adolescent boys and girls to display themselves in the show window of adult society.

Should you have any parties at all for these wild young buccannars? Yes, occasionally, but not often with both sexes present. And, then, introduce rough games and plenty of noise and roguery to answer to the natural demands of the age.

There should be full freedom of intermingling but no pairing off of the sexes, except perhaps to alternate them while they sit in a circle for a few minutes to partake of some simple refreshments like doughnuts and sweet cider.

An hour or two with a competent leader trudging in an informal group through the woods or out over the hills, a similar trip through the park with a happy teacher in charge, with each carrying a light lunch, the ostensible purpose being to study birds or trees or animals, and the real purpose being to have a happy group of pre-adolescent boys and girls in a "party" of this kind is enough to delight the eye and gladden the heart of one who really knows what God implanted within their charming young natures.

Parents and teachers, let us have more of this indulgence of the real heart hunger of our children and less or none of the artificialism. You can afford to take time out of the school recitation for a regular weekly party like the outing described above.

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## PUSS IN BOOTS JUNIOR

By David Cory.

ONE day as little Puss Junior was walking around the garden of my Lord of Carabas he heard a tiny voice say:

"Tell me a story, Puss Junior, dear. Of where you have been for over a year."

I know you have traveled by mountain and plain, and by swift aeroplane."

"Who are you?" asked Puss, for he couldn't see anybody, although he looked all around.

"I'm the little mouse that lives in the pantry," replied the tiny voice, and then a little mouse crept out from behind a tree and stood on her hind legs right in front of Puss Junior. I think she was very brave, for mice are dreadfully afraid of cats, you know.

"Goodness me!" said Puss. "If I should start to tell you about my travels it would take me maybe a year. Haven't you something interesting to show me?"

"I have indeed," replied the little mouse. "Come with me." So Puss followed her across the garden until they came to the royal stables. But they didn't go in the big door. Oh, my, no! The little mouse went around to the rear and tapped three times on a little door. And when it opened Puss saw another mouse, much older than his small friend, with a cap on his head.

"This is Puss Junior," said the little mouse, and then the gray-haired mouse said to Puss: "I am very glad to meet you, Sir Klitten. Come in."

Well, when Puss entered he saw a strange sort of a place. Of course, he thought it would be the mouse's home; but it wasn't. It was a little railway train, and as soon as Puss was aboard the whistle blew and away it went, choo! choo! and dinged and rattled like the trains you and I have ridden on.

By and by a little mouse, dressed just like a conductor, came through the train and said, "Next stop, Mouserville."

"That's where we get off," said Puss Junior's little friend. And then she looked in her vanity bag and took out a little mirror and smoothed her hair, and then the train stopped. So she and Puss got out.

"Here is our coach," she said. And sure enough, standing close to the platform was a pretty little black coach with four mice for horses and a mouse coachman. So she and Puss got in and drove away, and by and by they came to a little red house by a green wood.

"Whoa!" said the coachman, and the footman jumped down from his seat in the back and opened the door for Puss and the little mouse, and then the front door of the little house opened and Puss saw his old friend, the Mouse that Ran Up the Clock.

"Ticky, ticky, ticky!" "Ticky, ticky, ticky!" The train was on time. Hip, hip hooray.

For tomorrow you know is Xmas Day.

And then Puss heard a clock strike "one, two, three" and in the next story you shall hear what happened after that.

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To Be Continued.